

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 3: F177 District (3)

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Song En was the most trouble-making student among all the students.

He'd climb onto rooftops, go into the sea to catch turtles, and even dare to patch up a hole in the sky.

Every time the list of wrongdoers came out, his name was on it. After being punished and beaten many times, Song En gradually realized the truth: everyone else was unreliable, and only Junior Sister was loyal. Later, no matter how much trouble he caused, he never forgot to bring Song Ke along. Even if they ended up crying from getting beaten up, at least there was someone to accompany him.

In the resting room, Song En was hooked up to an IV, lying weakly on the bed.

Song Ke sat beside him, peeling tea eggs.

The morning news report faintly echoed in the background, the volume too low to catch everything.

“The Alliance Meteorological Bureau has issued a high-temperature red alert... outdoor activities are to be suspended... reduce travel.”

“If any abnormal situations are detected, please report them promptly to the relevant departments.”

At the entrance, Aunt Pang was lecturing a mischievous student by the ear, her loud voice momentarily overpowering the news reporter.

“The Qinglan Research Institute... solar activity peak... initiating... weather simulation system.”

Song Ke's attention drifted for a few seconds due to the mention of the research institute. When she lowered her head again, the tea eggs she'd been peeling were now nothing but empty shells in her hands.

On the bed, Song En was humming and holding his head, continuously chewing.

Song Ke: "..."

Considering their past shared hardships, she, as the adult, chose to let it slide that he was hogging all the egg. She pulled another egg out of her pocket.

In the beds next door, a lively discussion about this year's assessment for the Azure Phoenix began. The number of votes in favor of Zhang Ci passing successfully had reached ninety percent.

Song En muttered in dissatisfaction, "Next year, you'll witness my greatness."

At just nineteen years old, he hadn't reached the required age for registration yet, but he was already ambitiously planning his future. He initially wanted Song Ke to praise him a little, but when he turned his head to check, he saw his Junior Sister holding a completely peeled tea egg, lost in thought.

"What are you thinking about?"

"Se-Senior Brother, have you seen gray, grayish-white eyes before?"

"I have," Song En stared at the egg, answering absentmindedly.

"Why, why would, they turn gray?"

"Come closer, and I'll tell you."

Song Ke leaned in.

Song En suddenly opened his mouth, snatching the egg from her hand, "What else could it be? Cataracts!"

Song Ke: "...". He didn't really answer seriously.

She could tolerate him making fun of her and teasing her, but the fact that there were two tea eggs, and she hadn't even had a bite, was truly intolerable.

Expressionlessly, Song Ke raised her fist, and soon the room was filled with cries of pain.

“Junior Sister, spare me!”

“Junior Sister, have you forgotten the bird nests we dug, the earthworms we collected, the beatings we endured together over the years?”

“Have you forgotten about us... cough, cough, cough!”

Mid-shout, Song En began to cough intensely. His face turned bright red from the high fever, and tears welled up in his eyes due to the fever.

Watching his pitiful state, Song Ke hesitated a bit.

Song En, on the other hand, quickly regained his composure after catching his breath and earnestly promised with a playful smile, “Tomorrow! Tomorrow, I’ll give you four eggs to make up for it. Can’t I do that, Junior Sister? Senior Brother keeps his promises!”

...

After seeing Song En, Song Ke finally got to meet her cheap master, Zhang Ting.

Zhang Ting was the golden signboard of the entire Yue Mountain Martial Arts School, a top-notch combat master in the Alliance. Despite his kind, approachable, and friendly appearance, in reality, his temper was both foul and unyielding. He was like a firecracker, bursting and popping at the slightest provocation.

When Song Ke sneaked into the meditation room, Zhang Ting was in a cross-legged meditation. The room was so quiet that you could hear a pin drop, creating an unexpectedly solemn atmosphere.

In other people’s words, there was a certain aura around Zhang Ting.

On the table were some shiny walnuts. Song Ke thought of her unfortunate tea eggs, so she surreptitiously reached out to touch them, but Zhang Ting, with his eyes closed, accurately slapped her hand away, saying, “You’re drooling! Didn’t you have breakfast?”

Song Ke covered her reddening hand back, looking pitifully aggrieved, “I... I didn’t eat.”

Zhang Ting slightly opened his left eye, peeking at her through the narrow gap. “Are you so hungry that you’ve lost your mind? You dare to eye my walnuts!” But as he caught sight of Song Ke’s pitiable expression, he paused, “...I haven’t touched my portion yet. Go and eat.”

Song Ke’s eyes lit up, and she took advantage of the situation, moving closer, “Master, about that, that sword from last time, could I, could I borrow it to take a look?”

Zhang Ting’s expression instantly became difficult to describe. “Don’t even think about it. How did that sword become so sticky? Did you get your saliva on it?”

Song Ke felt embarrassed and looked down.

Maybe, perhaps, it was indeed her saliva. She had been a bit scared that night and ended up falling asleep while holding the sword.

Zhang Ting snorted lightly, seeing through it but not saying anything. He stood up and walked a couple of steps, pulling two plastic bags out of a low cabinet.

“Your eighteenth birthday is coming up, right? Here, this is the gift from your master.”

“Why are there two, two gifts?”

“One is for you, the other is for... your Senior Brother Zhang.”

Song Ke’s birthday was the day she was picked up by her grandfather.

Coincidentally, it was the same day as Zhang Ci’s birthday. Since she started learning martial arts on Yue Mountain, she had celebrated her birthday together with Zhang Ci every year. This was also why everyone joked and called her “child bride.”

While Zhang Ting appeared composed, his tone was a bit stiff, “When he’s back, find a moment to give it to him.”

“You can give it to him yourself.” Song Ke didn’t understand why she had to deliver it. She really didn’t know Senior Brother Zhang well.

Zhang Ting's eyes narrowed, and he gruffly shouted, "If I tell you to give it, then give it! Stop with the useless chatter!"

Zhang Ting's sternness startled Song Ke, making her shrink her head.

Her master was really quite fierce.

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After sweating like a fountain in the martial arts hall all day long and receiving two swats with a wooden ruler on her palms, Song Ke returned home, her head hanging dejectedly.

Just as she passed the checkpoint, she noticed that there were quite a few people gathered around the pier ahead. Standing on the outer circle, she listened with a tilt of her ear and found out that it seemed to be the group that Grandpa Cheng had sent to search for Uncle Bing that had returned.

The crowd around was in a buzz, discussing the bizarre capsizing incident of the research team. The consequences of the accident were quite devastating, with everyone on the same boat with Uncle Bing either dead or missing. In the end, they managed to retrieve only one researcher who was barely alive.

As the onlookers gathered more and more, before long, Song Ke found herself pushed into the inner circle. The scene of so many people talking in a cluster made her feel slightly uncomfortable.

She was about to slip away when suddenly, a mournful scream erupted from the crowd, "Where's Abing? Why is it only you who came back? Where's Abing?"

Aunt Qing's voice was hoarse as she forcefully clung onto the surviving researcher, shouting at the top of her lungs. Others tried to pull her away, but to no avail.

Tugged back and forth by her, the researcher, who was lying limp on the ground, displayed evident signs of mental abnormality. His expression vacillated between blankness, tears, and laughter, as he incessantly muttered, "Dead, all dead hahaha!"

His collar was pulled down halfway, revealing layers of dark bruises on his shoulder. His pupils were dilated, and when the dazzling sunlight hit them, they faintly reflected an inorganic grayish-white sheen.

“They’re here!”

At that moment, the District 177 security officers rushed in with haste, accompanied by three individuals.

The first two wore police uniforms and looked arrogant. However, when they spoke to the middle-aged man who followed them, they became exceptionally respectful, demonstrating a humble demeanor.

The middle-aged man wore a plain work jacket and had an unfamiliar face. He wasn’t a native of District 177.

Furrowing his brows, he examined the crazy researcher before him. His expression then shifted dramatically, and he shouted loudly, “Back away! Everyone, disperse!”

While the crowd was still bewildered, the researcher in the center suddenly went berserk.

Initially, he had been pushed and shoved around by Aunt Qin, so he had already ended up sprawled on the ground in a sorry state. But now, he was like a dying fish on a chopping board, suddenly flipping over and leaping up. He unleashed indiscriminate attacks in all directions.

Aunt Qin was closest to him and suffered the brunt of his first assault. He bit off a large piece of flesh from her arm, his teeth glinting brightly. In the span of a few breaths, uneven rows of sharp teeth somehow grew between his teeth, and in just a matter of moments, he had completely pierced through the lower half of his face, presenting a grotesque sight of blood and flesh.

“Monster!”

The scene was truly horrifying, and the witnesses were frightened pale. They scattered in all directions to escape the chaos. However, due to the proximity, many of them tripped and fell. Seizing this opportunity, the crazed creature pounced on them, plunging the scene into chaotic disorder.

Song Ke stood frozen in place as the escaping crowd continually bumped into her shoulders and back. It was as though her feet were glued to the ground, and she couldn't move.

The creature's eyes... had turned gray-white.

In this critical moment, the middle-aged man brought by the police took action.

A gust of wind suddenly swept across the area. Before Song Ke could comprehend what was happening, the man's clothes fluttered, and almost instantly, he appeared in front of the frenzied monster.

In disbelief, Song Ke rubbed her eyes and took a few steps back, seeking refuge on a nearby fishing boat.

He's so fast! She hadn't been able to fully see his movements just now!

The frenzied monster was blown high into the sky by the fierce wind column. It was trapped in a vortex-like state, completely powerless to resist. The already tattered clothes were shredded into pieces, and its expression grew increasingly violent.

Looking at the middle-aged man in contrast, even though he was also at the center of the storm, he remained completely unharmed. He pushed both hands forward steadily, and the air in his palms fluctuated faintly, constantly creating a wind field to suppress the creature.

However, as time passed, the man's complexion grew more strained, and beads of sweat started to form on his forehead. About ten minutes later, the struggling of the creature within the vortex gradually ceased. Its eyeballs slowly closed, appearing to have lost all signs of life.

The middle-aged man let out a long breath, clasping his palms together. The swift winds that had arisen from nowhere around him suddenly disappeared inexplicably. The creature then fell from midair with a loud "thud," kicking up a cloud of choking dust upon impact.

He turned around and nodded slightly to the people behind him who were maintaining order, saying, "It's done, take it away."

Unexpectedly, one of the police officers suddenly had a drastic change in expression. In a state of panic, he shouted loudly at the middle-aged man, "Watch out!"

The middle-aged man swiftly turned his head!

The barely breathing creature had roared behind him, its sharp claws swiping towards him.

The middle-aged man couldn't evade in time, and in his haste, his coat pocket was torn, resulting in a few strands of bright red blood being drawn.

A sharp wind blade sliced across the creature's neck. More than half of its head was severed, hanging precariously on its neck.

This time, the creature remained absolutely motionless.

The middle-aged man's expression turned grim. He stared at his wound for two seconds, then immediately walked away with large strides, commanding, "Go back quickly!"

His demeanor was no longer composed, and his eyes held a trace of indescribable terror.

The police officers dragged the monster's corpse away, and Song Ke slowly straightened her body.

The ground in front of her was strewn with debris—fragments of clothes, viscous brown liquid, and thin traces of blood mingled together, emitting a nauseating odor. The crowd that had surrounded the area just ten minutes ago had long since fled in every direction, leaving no trace behind.

The researcher... turned into a monster? Who is this middle-aged man? How can he control the wind?

Song Ke's understanding was in utter disarray. What on earth was all this?

Exhausted, she returned home, her perception of the world shattered.

Passing by Aming's grave, the once moist grapes had withered and rotted. Only the grasshopper made of straw remained vividly intact.

She crouched down, adjusting the grasshopper, and muttered softly, “Aming, did you also turn... turn into that kind of monster?”

Dead people wouldn’t answer her questions, nor would dead birds.

Song Ke was destined not to get any answers.

The neighbors’ door was tightly shut, and a piece of paper attached to it fluttered in the wind, lifting up one corner.

Have these people... not returned yet?

She knocked on the door with force, but there was still a prolonged silence. No one responded. She looked left and right, and the surroundings were desolate and devoid of people.

Song Ke glanced at the short wall nearby, took a deep breath, and then suddenly retreated, and prepared to jump. Suddenly, the flat wall surface began to flicker, and her field of vision was engulfed by an overwhelming brightness.

Song Ke raised her head in astonishment.

It was the moment of sunset. The sun, unwilling to sink at this moment, erupted with a dazzling brilliance, as if it would never rise again tomorrow.

The scorching light grew more intense, accompanied by an all-encompassing burning sensation, pushing human senses to their limits.

Song Ke felt the same dizziness and headache she had a few days ago when she was sunburned, but this time it was even more uncomfortable. She felt like she was suffocating, the air around her suddenly became thin, and even the flow of her blood felt like it was burning, consuming every inch of her muscles and bones.

Without caring to look at the neighbor’s wall again, she gritted her teeth and retreated in the opposite direction. The intense white light covered her eyes, and the brief blindness made her unable to see anything clearly.

“Bang—” in the distance, there was a faint sound of streetlight shattering, and then the world fell into silence, with no more sounds.

She couldn’t hear anything anymore.

Song Ke collapsed to the ground.

Her body was burning hot, her skin was reddened, and her head was becoming increasingly heavy. She struggled to crawl in the direction of her memories, finally reaching her own front door. She used her last bit of strength to push it open, and Song Ke crawled inside with great difficulty, trembling as she closed the door.

Then she let the intense heat engulf her, and she completely lost consciousness.